WESTWORDS

WESTWORDS

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The Art of Learning

Fall is a time of learning, the traditional beginning of the academic year. Because of this, the Japanese word for learning appears on the cover of the fall *Westwords*.

One of the spheres of learning is the creative process. In this issue we learn from prize winning writers.

For the fourth consecutive year, a Mount student has won first place in the Atlantic National Contest. Michelle Lundborg's story, "Just High Enough the Walls," appeared in an earlier *Westwords*. Marianne Stanley's fourth place story, "Dorobo Day," appears in this issue with Camille Esselle's merit poem, "Fata Morgana," and Kathryn Kenyon's fifth place story, "Climbing, Bending Tower." Merry Andrews's poem "Deaf Mute" received an honorable mention and appeared in an earlier issue. "The Chalking," a story by Sharon Bowen also received a merit paper in the Atlantic Contest.

Six Cabrini Writing Awards were given to Mount students this year. Marianne Stanley received a second recognition of "Dorobo Day" with an honorable mention from Cabrini. Merry Andrews's "How the Duck Got Its Beak" took second place and "Bending, Climbing Tower" by Kathryn Kenyon took third in the story division. Third prize poem was awarded to Diane de Anda's "When When Wasn't." Michelle Lundborg's story "Just High Enough the Walls" received an honorable mention with Sheri Chapman's poem "The Welcome Thief."

These students have learned the workings of the creative process. We invite you to learn from them in this issue of *Westwords*.

(MM)^{2}

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Cabrini Literary Guild Writing Award
Third prize $50.00 in Poem Contest

When When Wasn't

When crows were fair
And fleas had hair,
King Nonsense ruled the earth and sea
With his delicate queen, Catastrophe,
Sweet and pert from her jelly bean nose
To the very green tip of her rhubarb toes.
Unique to perfection this charming duet
Of queen and Catastrophic marionet.

Their world was a maze of choc-late plateaus
With white seltzer rivers in bubbly clothes.
And oh! the squire's delight
In riding pink roosters on a sun-lit night,
Through gardens of shoes
Who stood neatly in two's
With wrinkled brown faces,
Mute, as their tongues were entangled in laces.

Then frolicking children with sun-tred hair
Danced in the savor of cinnamon trees,
And filled the gold air
With a laugh of a sigh, with a cough or a sneeze.
They'd track ol' red rabbit,
But more was their habit
To snatch silver spiders, a token for sister, and
giggly and silly
Sit one on the edge of her artichoke lily.

But down in the wicked grey forest of cats
Was plotting and growling and fear of the rats,
Whose chartruse claws crept in each night
To steal a morcell for King Ratisright.
To hide in the boughs would do cat no good,
As rats held hallowed no part of that wood.
How crafty these creatures with laughing pink eyes.
Who made cat jelly from grey cat's thighs.

When no was yes
And all was more than one could guess,
And rivers swam to level hills
Where horses laughed through crooked bills.
When oranges wheezed upon pink trees
And clouds were constantly bothered by fleas,
King Nonsense ruled upon the knee
Of his frivolous queen, Catastrophe.

DIANE DE ANDA

Bending, Climbing Tower

KATHRYN KENYON

Cabrini Literary Guild Writing Award
Third prize $50.00 in Story Contest
Atlantic Monthly National Creative Writing Contest
Fifth prize in Story Contest

While all the city moved with torrid din under the passionate grasp of a heated summer sun, there stirred a quiet family in their green house on Lethe Street. Inside, in the livid lighting of the room, a lanky factory-worker stood beside his wife. Rivulets of sweat moved down his dark face, Job's face. Her fingers ran over the crushed lettuce leaves that were wet with oil and placed the meat and fresh bisquits in a basket. A small, black baby wept; her brother laughed.

"The sea, the sea," he breathed. His throat quivered with the rolling sound and his feet walked over imaginary sand that stretched with hills and gullies and salty streams. What was this tremendous thing, this sea, he had been told of?

"Father, is it large?"

"Yes, my boy, it's very large."

"Mother, are there trees there?"

"Why, no, boy, I don't reckon." He stood in thought, sifting in and out the captured images he hoped to see--the fish, the birds, glistening sand castles instead of the sticky mud he knew. It would be different from the bogs at home in Alabama. But would he feel the water tumble at his feet and a breeze clutch his knitted curls as he had been told? He ran around the room, his arms in rapid motion as he fought the waves.

"I cain swim just anywhere," he panted to his arms.

The sea was changing as the tides of thought. In, out, growing, falling, tall waves, no waves and then a calm. But ripples, still, that sent a current to the sand were always there beneath the tides, *always there*. Ripples, waves elated, despondent, up and down. It was unlike the bogs with mourning willows at their side; it was alone; it moved, unheeding all. It was not new.

Supper was ready! It stood in its yellow basket with

pitchers of drink surrounding. Swift, deep, rich laughter drew the family's words together. Each one spoke and grinned with a happiness as their intoxicant and then that exodus of four marched to their old car outside. Chatter winged to the sky and smoky exhaust was blown into a littered gutter. They saw the sky without a cloud, without a mar--just sun and white light. This same old car had moved the family and their load across the country weeks before to the west, a beginning west that was ever fresh, a life anew. And now they drove along the city's streets, streets to which they hoped to feel akin. Cars sprinted, horns hooted, and the buildings came and disappeared behind them as they drove. They were going west, toward the sun and as it seemed nearer, a shining hugeness gazed at them.

"The sea, the sea," the boy cried out. It was vast; it was gentle. The waves played quietly over the sand and a parade of umbrella colours beaded the downtrod sand. Their car slowed as Job approached the dusty bank where other cars were parked. He stopped. He opened the door and rose, stood looking, his eyes content.

"Ah," he whispered. "The New World!" All was silent. His eyes shone red, he bowed his head, "Here, just here," he said, patiently, knowingly. He knew. He need not ask. He knew it *was* here, the west. Different. He smiled. He laughed with a mounting gaiety. The children jumped from the car. Their father was happy. They threw small noises from their throats--their own language, how splendidly they understood it.

Walking over the basking sand, they formed a line. Job, his easy, vivid limbs bore the family pack, his strength alive, incarnate in his lively saunter. Blankets, mats, and pouting bags endued his arms. On they trekked. The boy ran, his face exultant. He sang.

The colour of the air was warm. It was ashen gold.

"Come along here, boy!" his father called. But the boy did not stop. On he ran; he ran until the waves reached out, touched and cooled his feet. He stared at the sun's reflection until his eyes saw only whiteness.. And then he touched the wet sand with his hands as the waves swept around his feet. It was all that did not change, that sand, nor did thoughts change, just tides.. The thoughts and sand would stoop and the sea ran over them. They shifted as the billows bid. The boy moved his fingers slowly, intently, making a ball of the formless sand. It was soft; he clapped his hands, broke the ball and watched

it fall back into the water. It was hard and his hands stung as it fell.

Turning to see his parents, the boy watched his father put up a red umbrella; his mother spread the mats. Tanned, fair faces, pale heads turned to see them. Fingers and eyes pointed. Job sighed and pretended he did not see. He stooped to push the stem of the tattered sunshade farther into the sand. Not a word passed between the Negro and his wife. They were silent, moving surely, seeming gay and they unpacked their things, hoping this time it was different. The boy came back and eagerly he took his sister by the hand. They waited for their father. A white voice hissed.

"Devil, be gone!" it cried. The boy looked 'round. There was no devil. He frowned. He then ran to the waves again and splashed the sandy brine onto his sister's legs. They laughed, approached elation as they dug holes in the sand. And each wave came to fill their empty diggings with swirling, knotted spume. But on they dug and built a tower of sand and seaweed, and then began to look for speckled shells. Another child, a boy, curious, looked on. He sat quietly in the water and watched their search, his blue eyes moving as they moved. He saw a shell and ran to pick it up.

"Look, here is one," he shouted, waving the white-brown shell above his head. He put it on the tower at the top as the boy and his small, shy sister looked.

"It's a window!" They all laughed and Job stood by. His son looked up at him with doubt. Job nodded his hopeful head. He felt that life was different here--different, and he watched their glee, their wind-blown words run between their three gay heads. And then he left, content, to sit beside the water with his wife. All seemed right.

The sun swam nearer to the water's edge and time passed freely. But a roar went up into the tranquil sky. A small, stout man approached the children playing. He grabbed his laughing child and sneered at the chosen playmates.

"Damn! You niggers, scat," he stamped his foot. The children gaped with sudden surprise. They knew. But ready tears stood up to fall. Frightened lips quivered. Job started. He stared at the man and rose to walk over to him. That too would be a threat, a threat that echoed the angry, stamping foot and the white man turned his back to leave quickly. Job called the boy and girl to him, yet though they ran, the day was shattered. The sun shone everywhere

but on their shady patch of blankets and joy crashed in the waves.

"Home," sobbed the infant. "Home." But where was home? the comfort, joy. Job stood with an arm reaching down to each child. He was angry and his lips and heart arrested mounting tremors as they choked his thoughts. He stretched an arm in front of him, looking at the smoothness of the skin. The fingers numb, he pressed them into his hand, the quiet fist defeated. He folded the mats and replaced the ready dinner in its basket. His fluency was acted with decorum and the silent man succumbed to a surrounding air which, settling like a lurid cloud about his shoulders, pressed an unwielding burden. Quickly his wife, too, collected their goods and moved away from the pebbly strand. The children followed far behind, their heels pulling them back to the water. They struggled and bravely managed to deport their anxious feet from the summoning waves. The waves betrayed. They always changed. Pretended goodness, good intent, they changed. They were never real, never really there with calmness. The ripples hid below, but the sand stayed as it was.

The boy smelled the last salt spray. He closed his eyes and saw the beach as it was now, as it would be in his boyhood thoughts--his first beach. He felt the sand grit beneath his nails and the dryness of it on his arm. When suddenly he ran to an old, soiled paper bag lying unowned. He grabbed it and defiantly scooped the White Man's sand into it. He clutched the bagful with both arms and marched behind his parents. His angry heart beat faster. His eyes scrutinized the shining sand and with deliberate, mounting motion he pounded harder with his toes. His soles stung from the sand's heat. His heart screamed out and tears thundered down his nose. Why? he asked. He held his sand tighter until the wrinkled bag was painful on his skin. He could bear defeat no longer. Then a white face smirked with a triumph as he passed, that same fat face that had stamped. "Niggers!" it chuckled again. The boy's body grew hot as he gazed; he could contain this Thing no longer and he clutched his bag beneath one arm. He drew the other hand behind him and commanded all his force in it--that one small hand. And with fast flying fingers he struck his sister on the chin.

"You! You!" he squalled to the same white smirk. He ran to his sister and bent quickly over her on the sand. Their watery cheeks touched; with rapid agitation he touched

her head with his empty hand, shared a desperate, rending and fled to the car. His father was surprised, stern, looked round to retread heavy steps. The mother swooped down beside her crying babe and with consoling arms and ruffled lips uttering love words, embosomed the infant to her. Job put down the bags and outstretched his hand.

"Come here, boy," the steady accent pealed. "What do you just think you're doin'?" The boy stood stricken.

"Come here, son, you hear," he spoke. The boy faltered nearer, then halted. He gazed at his father's eyes upon him. There was strength in those afflicted eyes, but now they looked severly with a new encouragement at the boy. His head slouched as he moved and settled his feet in the sand beside his father's firm ones. The bag began to weigh his arms with anguish.

"Dare you shout like that, my boy?"
The child drooped his head and shook it.

"Son," his father's gentle fingers raised his chin. "Son, dare you shout like that? Why, this man here's done nothin'!" he said hiding bitterness. The boy swallowed dryness in his mouth.

"No," he uttered, breathing barely. Yet no semblance admitted the guilt he did not feel and the man stood looking with his head half turned away, not certain of this tall, commanding voice that stood beside the boy. The man was uneasy; his eyes roved on the sand between the pair and himself, looking as though he wished to gaze boldly, yet he did not and half smiled with a frowning brow.

"Son?"

"No," he said with listing plainness and dropped his nervous gaze. His father hailed the white man with nodding head--the white man grinned and nodded back now, relieved that the tallness and the voice were leaving. And then they walked, son and father, to their waiting car.

No voices moved while they drove home over the same city streets again , No voices moved, no eyes spoke. Hope was spent. The west was old, the day worn. The ocean spume rolled over the sand. And as the boy looked round at the fading sea, he watched a yellow sun go down.

Their withered house stood empty and unlit when they arrived outside. The green paint peeling from the walls left only bare wood beneath. No grass nor tree grew in front to soften the harsh outline and a neighbour's ugly dog yelped homely sounds to their welcome. Job got out and carried their bundles in his arms.

"Open the door," he called to his son. The boy left his bag and thrust the door inside. He ran to both the rooms to light his father's way. The light was thin, though, and only grayed the rooms with its dullness. A soundless noise described his mother's movements as she placed the sandy dinner on the table.

"Come along, you then, and eat your supper," she summoned each of them. The family sat as the table creaked its song in the wooden boards.

"Beach?" the boy asked his father. Job put a warm hand on the boy's and pressed an answer into the young flesh.

"Yes, son," he said looking through the darkness to the boy. His tired eyes gazed steadily past the windows, beyond the street and he thought he saw a willow tree that stood beside the bogs at home, but home was far away. The boy ate his bread with sullen jaws then wordlessly he left the table. He heard his steps walk across the floor and he heard his heart follow.

"Run along and play, then," his mother called. He moved quickly out the door and with practiced haste he scurried across the dirt-floored yard and snatched his precious bag. He poured the sand out onto the settled dust and sat down beside it. He closed his eyes and saw the beach. He felt the sand on his arm. He saw a speckled shell and a dried seaweed leaf. The water did not matter, not the tides nor thoughts, but only sand that never changed. The sand, the muddy bogs. And with eager, burning hands his fingers molded the sand again into his joyous tower. It reached higher than the first one had, and it was his.

The Waiting Room

Ances-

tral fiends anti-

cipate, congratulate

and emulate the hatching, crowding new-

born dead

KATHY BAKER

I hurried
into the morning with my face
and then,
letting my arms swing to the left--
to the right, tucked in the open place.
it stood armed for my hands
and facing the first side
of the morning--
a lone pine tree.

Pine

GINNY SPELTZ

Picnic

MARIE DE ARCANGELIS

The window wipers pushed the rain in walls
against the curve of the windshield as we drove
and left miles behind us in the misty groves
of orange trees lining the road. At the park, squalling
children were being bundled with dogs and balls
and baskets of food into bulging station wagons.
You and I, laughing, caught the rain on our tongues
as we walked through the zoo calling
to the camels and smelling the wet fur and soggy peanut shells crushin
under our shoes. In a dirty cage, a yellow and black
pacing cat glared back at us through the slats
of his cell. Later, we sat in the car filling
our stomachs with warm chocolate and cold pizza
while the rain blurred the world outside our metal umbrella.

Waterfall

PAM MARTIN

Babbling.
gurgled in sign of
a movement, adventure, and tumbling
over leaf, over tree, over rock down to meet
bubbles that break and congeal to cross the shallow pool
slowly, the race to slide over moss and smooth
stones blocked by soggy twigs and small bugs
on skeletons of leaves.
still flowing.

Sand Scenes

MICHELLE MAYOTTE

Brown bodies on paler sand
interrupt the gray
silent winter beach.

Sleeping sentry sea gulls watch
the rusty red sea
sneak up to brownpaper cliffs.

Stonesomber sand softly
guards a gray bird's feather
and waves it in the wind.

Changer's Kin

SHEILA LE BLANC

"On the land they have a child.....named Today.
On the sea they know three children
.....named Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow."

North Atlantic – Carl Sandburg

The sun was sinking so Jeremy got off his log and started home. Green waves rolled through a blue kaleidoscope of tones, finally settling for a dull grey-blue. Picking a trail through the wet sand, Jeremy slouched on, the damp, brown stuff oozing around and between his toes. It slowly slid back into the prints making the trail as it had been before without Jeremy.

More and more the light bent as the fragile reflection once again made a stab at saving a silently drowning sun. Jeremy stood with toes curled into the muddy sand, seeing the reflection and the sun disappear. Swallowed by the sea.

In the soft dusk he could see plunging waves and the white-flecked fantails when they met the boulders of the old sea wall in ancient battle. Scaley, moss-grown and fossil-imbedded, the sea rocks had been there longer than Jeremy's eleven years; longer than anyone in town could remember except for old Jonas Hine. Jonas knew about the wall but a long while back he had lost the truth among the fantasy of his dreams. No one could sort the facts from the tales and Jonas was beyond shoving his thoughts into a world he had grown tired of. So no one knew anything about the wall but that it had been there for many years and was likely to be there forever.

One tanned muscled foot on one black green-slimed rock and then the other foot on another, Jeremy gripped the cracks in the boulders with strong, blunt fingers and heaved his slender body up the low, slanting side of the wall. A final foothold among the moss and Jeremy stood on the ridge of the wall feeling the fossil lumps and indents beneath his feet. Gulls overhead were making one last run from shore to sea. Swooping in wide circles to pinpoint

their prey, diving to grip the victim, ascending in leisurely manner; their dinner assured, the birds glided into shore and settled for the night. In the disappearing light, down and feathers became silver grey and black. Gulls' eyes glowed red, catching and returning the waning sunlight.

Jeremy cocked his head. From far inside a voice, muffled and fuzzy, but familiar, seemed to echo his thoughts.

I am Kin of the Changer.
I am a son of the Sea
And the Sea' wife, the Wind.

In faded blue denims, Jeremy stood alone on the old sea wall. The wind pulling at his hair, brushing past his sombre face, playfully rushed about his arms and legs, spanking the damp edges of his jeans and shirt against him. It was a cold, lonely feeling. The sea was changing again, giving back to the sun the warmth it had held during the day. Gradually the cold feeling went and Jeremy didn't feel the cold, just the sea. As in the poem his mother used to read, the wind now seemed to pull him to meet the sea. The waves rose higher as he moved closer to the edge of the wall.

Jeremy's mouth softened to an easy half-smile, his grey eyes taking on the look of a dreamer. He stood his ground on the edge of the sea wall and watched the waves tower above him. They flicked out foamy tentacles trying to catch him in play. He laughed without a sound at their efforts. He stayed on the rocks and watched.

In the half-light Jeremy's pale blue pants took muted grey tones and the wet of his trouser legs seemed black. His shirt was shadowed in greys, only the ridges of the folds still remained white, reflecting the fading light. Every once in a while a wave would splatter the clothes which covered his slim frame. Beginning to lose the rounded lines of a child, the slimness predicted lean strength in approaching manhood. Wet shirttails clung, flapped loosely around his waist then clung again as if loathe to be far from the warmth of Jeremy.

Salt flavoring was on his lips, his eyes were half-shut against the recurrent spray of the waves splitting after bombarding the rocks. Water washed over his feet and eddied in small pools in the hollows of the rocks, caught among the fossils. With each wave the tiny banks overflowed, the water running back over Jeremy's toes, old puddles and new down the sides of the wall hollow by hollow, 'til it joined the sea and was lost.

My tenth father was a gypsy
A singer of chanties
(Oh Blow The Man Down).

Facing the sea directly, the wind in his face, Jeremy listened to remembered sounds, the sound of the waves had roared for Jeremy muffled and far-off during four fishing seasons. He kept this sound alive by going to the sea and remembering.

Sea air was good for convalescents. Everyone had told Jeremy's mother that. So each day, after his sickness had gone, when his father was out on his boat hunting the great tuna, Jeremy and his mother would spend the morning at the beach. He would play in the sand, humping it, wet and pliable, into shapes of childhood imaginings. It hadn't mattered then to Jeremy that the waves no longer sounded in his background, that the sea wall no longer gargled with sucks and whoops as the waves plunged in and out of the boulders. He could feel it with his body and he knew the sea. He knew the tug of the surf and the pull of the tides; felt with his feet the play on the sea wall. He felt the sand crabs wiggle when caught in his hand and the taste of the salty water when he went out too far, clinging to his mother and silently laughing. The sounds hadn't mattered then. The sea was there and he was there. A kinship was between.

When he was nine he found a conch shell. The secrets within the shell did not whisper for him. The shell was silent; spiraled and lumpy. His hands moved over it each night before he went to bed. He played over the lumps and hollows on the brown-white swirls, curving his fingers down the smooth pink inside. He played with the shell but it never played for him.

Tomorrow, the doctors had told his parents, tomorrow he would take his shell to the hospital. He would take the sea and the poem of his mother and the good wishes of the townspeople and Jonas Hine.

In a week or so if he were good, he'd go down to sea and stand on the wall and watch. And listen——

to the green and grinding sea.

If he were good, the doctors had promised, he could hear the secrets of his shell. His laugh would have sound and the waves would roar. He could go out on his father's boat again and hear the cries of the crew raised when the net was full of the blue-finned fish. He would hear his

father's commands and the creaking boards of the rack as the crew "jigged" the tuna with their teethless hooks. They would clutch a fin on each side of the tuna, flipping them over the side and down the hatch. Jeremy liked this part best; the rhythm of the pull, the arch of the man's back as he bent to grasp the flapping monster, the quick snap forward as the tuna was propelled toward the hold, his muscled tail sharply smacking the deck, barely missing the man as he bent once more just under its sweep. It was full of sound: the tuna caught in the net beat the churning sea into a thunder of a thousand cannon shot together second after second.

From the bridge Jeremy would watch everything, listening to the sea, the fish and the crew. From the bridge he would see the wall as they came back with a catch. Things would be different then. He would be there on the sea--a part of it now, not meeting the sea from the rim of the wall which was more a part of the shore.

In a week, these waves would no longer be silent giants. Jeremy knew there were things to be shared, secrets held back for four years as if he had been walled in. Tomorrow, tomorrow, tomorrow, echoed in his mind. Tomorrow if I'm good.

Darkness was now covering the shore though the sky above the sea was still light as if some last piece of the sun was still floating on the surface. Jeremy turned to go. Bounding in a giant step to a boulder below, he gauged the distance from it to the ground. A shifting of toes to find firm places in the sea-worn rock, a slight crouch, a one-arm raised spring and Jeremy landed on the dark sand. Toes bent under, one knee on the sand, Jeremy wobbled for an instant then felt the hard grainy surface mash together as he thrust himself upright.

Sandpaper on sandpaper, he thought, scrubbing his hands off on the seat of his jeans, running over the rough stitching and brass rivets on his pockets. He watched the sea rolling softly in the semi-darkness. The waves were smaller now. Black and white. Out by the lighthouse plankton shimmered green in the reflections of the moon and just switched on incandescent beam of the tower. Clouds were lit briefly by the swinging light.

I saw the North Star once
And our old friend the Big Dipper
Only the sea between us.

The boats were coming in now, big clippers filled with

men weary for home, with tuna for the fisheries. Big tuna were caught here and he would soon help if he were good. Jeremy saw the tall mast and his father's banner as it came into the harbor. A week and he could stand on the wall and hear the song they sang if the catch was good. It was brave. He remembered only the feeling of it.

A piece of driftwood floated by. Jeremy chopped into a wave and retrieved it. With a wide swing he threw the wood out to sea, watching it disappear in a white-grey circle of water then reappear and bob on the head of a wave.

A week if I'm good, he sang silently.

Suddenly turning on his heel in the gritting sand, he sprinted toward the boats. His mother would be there meet-his father. Behind, the green of the rocks glowed emerald in the moonlight. The plankton green of the sea rolled closer and the waves washed black and white over his footprints.

Six O'clock

Twilight really is purple--

not the regal shade of death and darkness

but a rosy sunlight mauve of the dawn of the moon

and I held my breath when I saw it

and I ran into the house and shouted,

"The twilight really is purple, it really is!"

and they put down their books and looked at me.

"Come see it!" I cried, "Even the grass is pink and blue!

Come see it! I'll show it to you!"

They smiled at each other and turned their pages

and I ran back outside

to watch the purple twilight.

MICHELE MAYOTTE

The Riddle

And who will care,
except
you and I,
that once we knew a moment
more than any
pomegranate on any garden tree
except the first.

And who will know,
neither you nor I,
that moment lasted longer
than an almost
singing bird takes to find his happy song--
unless
he knows.

MICHELE MAYOTTE

How The Duck Got Its Beak

MERRY ANDREWS

Cabrini Literary Guild Writing Award
Second prize $100.00 in Story Contest

Today Honorable Mention

Once upon a time there lived two little old ladies named Agnes and Hortense, who were essentially very nice little old ladies, wearing tennis shoes to the liquor store and voting conservative in every election. They were dreadfully nice little old ladies, but had very few friends because of their one glaring fault. This was that they collected animals.

In their Danish Modern apartment, they kept, besides seven pairs of tennis shoes each, three mice, eight caterpillers, five salamanders (whom they were instructing in Greek), and eleven small fat puppy dogs. The people upstairs, who were essentially social climbers, often pounded on the floor and complained about the row these animals made when shut up in the billiard room alone. Sometimes they even threatened to call the Boys In Blue, that is to say, the police, when the noise became unbearable.

But because the little old ladies were so very resourceful, the Boys In Blue were never able to apprehend them for disturbing the peace or any such thing. For whenever the Boys came to the billiard room to check out the complaints of the people upstairs, the little old ladies would have the animals hidden. Obviously, then, there could be no arrest.

The mice they would hide in their copy of the Dictionary of American Slang in the living room. The caterpillers they popped into the oven in a muffin tin. The salamanders they pushed into the drainpipe in nice weather, or into the caffeine-free coffee can when it rained. The eleven small fat puppy dogs were so furry that when they rolled up together they looked like a blanket and that is exactly what the Boys thought they were. Sometimes Agnes would even slip a knitting needle or two in between the dogs as they curled up together, and then she would tell the Boys that she was knitting them.

And so the little old ladies went marvelously un-

apprehended until early in the spring of this very year. It seemed they had just acquired a new animal, a very respectable creature with a long neck and feathers that made Hortense sneeze if she didn't take Dristan. It somewhat resembled the contemporary duck except that it had no beak, but only a short snubby white and pink nose. It was called a wumpus.

They had not had this wumpus very long when it began to give its mating call at all hours of the night, because it missed its sweetheart back home, who was presumably also a wumpus. Long after the ladies had gone to bed at six, it could be heard trumpeting forth all over the neighborhood. And so the neighbors called the Boys In Blue. The Boys were by this time a little skeptical of the neighbors' complaints, but because they could hear the wumpus call down at the Precinct House, way out in Flatbush (an incredibly long way), they jumped into their small black motor cars and came quickly to the scene.

Because the little old ladies had retired for the evening, and were rather reticent about appearing half-garbed in front of such nice young men, they did not hide the animals as usual, but simply called out instructions to the creatures, and were immediately obeyed.

"Obscenity!" they called to the mice, who fled to the Dictionary.

"Muffin tin!" they chortled at the caterpillers, who quickly disappeared.

"Caffeine-free coffee can!" they said to the salamanders in Greek. And although they had some difficulty in translation because the Greeks, being an inferior race, had no word for "caffeine," the salamanders obeyed, and were no more.

The eleven small fat puppy dogs became a blanket in a wink of Agnes' small fat eye.

But the wumpus they had not trained. And the wumpus had no place to hide. He would not fit in their tennis shoes, not even in the large lavender ones that Hortense wore to the rally every Tuesday night. He would not fit behind the Currier and Ives print in the parlor; the Dictionary was quite full already. Where to hide a wumpus!

Suddenly Agnes, amazingly perceptive Agnes, grabbed the wumpus by his fascinating neck, and dashed out the kitchen door. There on the stoop stood the milk and orange juice bottles which the nice young milkman had left earlier in the day. Quickly Agnes pried the top from an orange

juice bottle, with his opposite end thrashing about in the chilly Brooklyn evening.

In came the Boys In Blue, "Duck!" yelled Hortense to Agnes, who was tiptoeing swiftly from the kitchen. But it was too late. The little old ladies had for once been tardy. Furthermore, they were caught. The Wickedly Strong Right Arm of the Law had triumphed again, as, of course, it always does. The Boys In Blue carried the dear little old ladies off to the Precinct House, after unearthing the salamanders from the coffee can, the puppies from the blanket, and the caterpillers from the muffin tin. The mice were left unfound in the Dictionary of American Slang, because of course the Boys would not look in *there* for anything.

Several days later, when the Boys returned to check the house for additional evidence, one of them chanced to find the wumpus, still stuck in the orange juice bottle. Of course, due to the chilly Brooklyn nights, the orange juice had frozen solid around the wumpus' short, pink and snubby nose. In fact, the short nose had altogether disappeared. When one kind Boy In Blue, whose grandmother worked for the SPCA, took the wumpus from the orange juice bottle, its nose was long and orange and shiny, and very cold. The Boy attempted to melt this strange nose, but it would not melt. He attempted to chip it off, but it seemed quite firmly attached. He only succeeded in making a few holes in the orange stuff, which the wumpus began breathe through. So, tremendously disappointed because he would have to confess failure to his grandmother, the Boy let the wumpus go. The wumpus fled back to his sweetheart, who loved him even with his new orange nose, and they got together and had many little wumpi, all of them with large orange noses. When reporting this strange thing to his grandmother, the Boy called the animal a "duck" because after all he had never seen a wumpus before, and furthermore he had heard Hortense tell Agnes, "Duck!" and had logically assumed it referred to the animal.

And this is how the duck got its beak. If you are a little old lady, therefore, wearing tennis shoes to the liquor store, and voting conservative in every election, beware of ducks. They do not like their new orange noses. They have it in for you.

My Son - He Goes to College

GINNY SPELTZ

Mama bought the El Toril on 90th and Vermont when I was eight. She sold it last month after my twelfth birthday. She liked the place because it was small and easy to keep clean. My father worked as a cook at an American restaurant for sixteen years before he died. I don't think he noticed whether it was clean or not; he just complained about the hours. But he used to like the hot dogs there. He would ask Mama to make them but she always forgot.

Ricardo, my brother, started at the university about the same time Mama leased the El Toril. In high school Ricardo spent most of his time at the gym. He wasn't too tall for his age; he was what Mama called a "big guy with beautiful shoulders." When he wasn't at the gym Ricardo played catch with the neighbor boys or ate cold tortillas and orange crush. Once I dropped his football into the tub and he slugged me in the arm for it. This might have helped him win that scholarship.

I usually came to the new place after school. I wasn't much help with the cooking because it was hard to reach to the top of the stove and I was afraid of grease. So I would sit between the stove and the table where Mama rolled tortilla dough. I sat on the chair with pillows piled on it and did my homework on the clean side of the table. From here I could watch the customers through the open door of the kitchen and eat ripe olives when Mama was out serving. Sometimes Mama would ask me my spelling and catechism. She always asked for the precepts of the Church and I usually put them in the wrong order.

Mama was good to the customers. She said our customers were "old" when they came in three times and said "special" instead of enchiladas and rice. Mr. Sanchez was one of these old customers, especially because he always punched "Granada" on the juke box after he ordered. This made Mama smile. She would talk with Mr. Sanchez and say she wanted to get some pictures from Tijuana to go with the song and our red walls.

Mr. Sanchez was there the day the girl came in. I watched her close the door slowly. I guessed she was our Ricardo's age because her hair was smooth on top and you could see only part of her knees. She picked the booth across from Mr. Sanchez. First she took off her coat and started to get a hanger from the rack. But she changed her mind and folded it once and laid it across the booth. She brushed off the seat quickly, held her skirt down in back and sat down.

Mama never hired any extra help. Sometimes Ricardo helped out on Friday afternoon and Saturday. But Mama always played a kind of game with me. Whenever she took an order from a customer, she would write it on a slip of paper and walk slowly back to the kitchen holding the slip high and calling out the order to the cook. I would hold my nose and answer "Si!" This way, she told me, her business looked good and she could pretend she wasn't working so hard. And she always rolled her r's alot when the customer was like Mr. Sanchez.

Mama played the game on that day when she took the order from our old customers and I would answer her. Then she went over to the girl. She was new because she turned over the menu two or three times. I heard Mama ask her if she wanted the number one with hot sauce. The girl shook her head. Then Mama held up two fingers and asked "With guacamole?" The girl was still reading the menu. She looked up, slowly, and Mama wrote something down and walked back to the kitchen without calling to me. She whispered to me "And I wasn't going to charge her for the guacamole." Mama hated making hamburgers because she had to use a different pan.

Mama finished frying the hamburger; she rubbed her hands on the sides of her skirt, pinched my cheek and left the kitchen. I got up from my chair and stood by the door.

"Going to school honey?" Mama asked as she laid the plate in front of the girl.

"Yes, I go to the university." The girl unfolded the napkin on her lap.

"Is it near here?" Mama asked.

"Not very. My car's got a flat. It's in the place next door." The girl reached for the salt and pepper.

"Oh, it must be hard, eh? My son--he goes to college. Ricardo Rodriguez--that's his name. He goes to the university you know. He works real hard. Me and my girl hardly ever see him--except when we go to the games, and then we don't

get real close."

"The girl nodded a little. She cut her hamburger in two.

"My son, he likes those things." She pointed to the plate. "Just like his father," Mama pushed the ketsup closer to the girl's plate. "It's hard. He's always telling us that. He used to help out here on Saturdays. Now he's got practice, you know. He's too big for the kitchen anyhow. You know, the shoulders."

The girl looked at Mama this time and Mama smiled. She came back to me in the kitchen and took out her purse. She opened it and pulled out several different sized pieces of paper. Then she went back to the girl's booth, carrying the papers at her side, close, so that they were beginning to wrinkle.

"See here," she said, "Ricardo's in it." She pointed to the sheet. "It's his team. He got in this picture too." Mama pulled a sheet from underneath. "He weighs 225 pounds. We got to go to this game--complimentary tickets you know. Nice looking eh?"

The girl was eating and sipping at her Pepsi. Mama started to pick up the papers. She did it quickly, taking one at a time, without putting them into a pile first. Mama spoke a little faster and you could hear the r's. "He works real hard. On his studies too. Doesn't help us out very often. But I don't mind. Well, I'll leave you to eat." Mama started to move away from the booth. "Maybe," she said, "maybe you didn't recognize the name, honey." She turned her head to face the girl. "It's Dick Rodriguez. My son Dick--that's the name."

"Yes," said the girl, "it's more familiar now."

Circle-- Schism--

Circle rolls now only half way:
half way East
half way West.

Each diameter rocks now like a pendulum
Slower
and slower
Until it stops in silence
to settle
and wait
Until the other half is silent
So they both can rise in rhythm
meet, fuse
And form the seam
Which will be the center
And strength of the
Circle

PAM MARTIN

Balance

JACQUELINE FARBER

Where is that fine line--
the line of distinction that splits
the circle of extremes? Each opposite fits
under rounded curves: the kind
that shade genius from idiocy.
The curves join and become one
unending circle of contrast: to split the sum
of a unified sphere would be
impossible without the narrow line
that separates extremes so
close in spirit. I grope to know
the elusive shade of difference: the fine,
unseen thread of definition that divides
doubt from knowledge--where truth abides.

The Advent

SISTER LEONARD, CSJ

a blade saved the dew-fall
in time impending
peace and the bud

and a word heard
whispered in the town stirred
in the lake-oasis whirred
around the sapling linden
tree and a rock

a bud drank the dew-fall
in time impending
light and the rock

and the word found its echo
in the vine
climbing the lattice work when wine
of trampled grapes flowed
at wheat harvest

a rock cupped the dew-fall
in time impending
time and the word

reclaimed its right
in the lake-oasis and the town's lives
where the sapling's shade revives
the worker
at wheat-harvest time.

The Kindred

OLIVIA GRIECO

Along the gray strand I ran
the purple mood
that questioned and looked
and questioned again
where the love to hold and willow
bright might be, where might be
the sting, the strangely pleasant thing
I sought.

And there were tall, straight buildings
facing me with quiet loveless eyes
and cries I thought I heard to call me,
they called "Release me," and I replied,
"Cease these strange callings
to one falling yet, and from a bronze
and rusty shackled place,"
and turned my face away.

Into a red and dusty room
I opened and kicked
into a place where gloom
might be bought among half-strung
paintings and vases from Italy
filled with straw flowers
and hours of sun dust
(gray in this sunless place).

A face turned so from a small gold brush
and those eyes picked up a light
I could not find...the time was dying
now...His name was Saffe, wearer
of green clothes. He stirred
the paint once with a stick,
then showed Venetian birds upon
a silver table and
ceramic lovers from the shores of Italy
held--locked in that embrace
in a bold glass case and through
the dust I saw my face bounce
hard off this little wall...and small
in the corner there was a light
in my eyes tucked fine
behind the prisoned lovers.

Missa Festiva

SISTER MONA ANN, CSJ

Kyrie: A bird sings in the dark
New leaves on grey trees cloud the sky
Soft rain breaks the bark of winter
We wait with the bird in the black branches
(Let the song be heard)

Gloria: Bright wings pull down the sun
Through silver mist blades flash from ground
A salute to the sun
(Sing a song to the sun)

Credo: Complex rumble of thunderheads
A mighty rain and the earth long dead
Is born in winds that flash from the sea
Bringing new mornings, islands of light
(We believe the night)

Sanctus: A green mist blows in the dove-white trees
A confusion of branches on summer's knee
Sings the bird to sleep
(Asleep in the twisted trees)

Benedictus: Quietly palm trees scatter dreams
Green branches on a purple path

Agnus Dei: The sun is caught in a reddening sky
A mockingbird screams down shadows
Darkness burns the hills to black
Trees move slowly
Losing track
Of doves that gather in the cool bell tower
To welcome the night

Freak is Dead

JANE LUECKE

"Green things are all around me! They're prickly, like pins." Freddie scrubbed his arm through the dirt and against the thistle spotted stem. He swept the ground smooth near the roots.

"I'm in prison, a green prison. The bars are stuck in brown cement. They are tall, so very high that I can't reach the top. They're yellow sometimes and they grow into a blue ceiling. And, if I look for a very long time, the ceiling foams and pictures come and go."

"I like that because I get very tired being chained to brown cement. It's cold down here in prison."

Freddie pressed his head and feet against the ground. Balanced at these points, he lifted, stomach first, until his body formed a bridge. He swayed, brushing his back across the sparce, spiney patches of weeds beneath him. Then the bridge fell. He met the soil suddenly, squashing the weeds as he let his arched back press downward.

He ground his fingers into the soft, chocolate-colored earth scraping his nails against rough pebbles as his fingers went deeper. Bouncing the rubber of his tennis shoes against the ground he pounded and burrowed until his feet felt the security of two small gullies.

"A mean king locked me in here. I've been here for years and years--a thousand billion maybe. And he beats me. But I'm brave. I don't cry."

Patting, sifting, stirring the soil, he plucked at grass roots and broke their web into small, lonely fragments.

A worm, freed from its dirt-clod bed, wound lazily around one finger, then another.

Freddie giggled and lifted the coiled finger in front of his nose. "You tickle. I know, you're here to rescue me. But you don't have to, because Freak is coming."

"He's as tall as a giant. And he wears silver metal all over him. It clatters and it covers his face. He told me once that he has to squint to see out of the holes. I

laughed and told him to make the holes bigger.

"For that he gave me a ride on his horse. He's silver too, and his name is Flash. That's because, when he gallops very fast, he looks like a flash of light. I've seen him at night sometimes. He streaks across the sky and, before you can blink, he's gone."

"Freak helps lots of people. He tells me so. But I'm his best friend."

One end of the worm quivered, testing the air surrounding Freddie's finger tip. The other end pushed the soft tube upward and the curl continued to unwind. Freddie watched with crossed eyes until the worm dropped onto his chest near the zipper of his orange sweat shirt. The worm flapped against the dry tufts of cotton. Then Freddie turned on his side and smiled as he saw it slither through the moist earth to safety.

Freddie bent his legs under him and knelt, watching the descent. The sun spread its light on the leaves overhead. It trickled over the edges, and black patterns sifted down to the brown and orange below. Freddie traced his finger around the dark splotches on the ground.

Humming "Frere Jacques," he began singing, "I'm in prison, I'm in prison. Look at me, look at me. Hmmm, hmmm..."

He heard a whimper, then a cry. His humming stopped.

Another whimper sounded. Then Freddie stood as his eyes searched for the source. In the distance, the weeds crackled and the tall stems waved unsteadily from the base upward.

Freddie waited a moment, then he called, "Duke. Is that you, Duke? Did he send you to prison too?"

Stem after stem began to sway, leaving the one before it to steady, then stop, still except for the rustle of the wind. Nearer and nearer the weed crackles came. Then a black fur body, freckled with specks of dry grass, appeared. Freddie looked down into the soft, black curls of his pet. The dog did not return his gaze. His head hung near the ground.

"Duke, I bet you didn't stand guard all night. I bet you went to kill the dragon instead."

Freddie bent over the fluffy body and rubbed the loose skin, pausing to pick the specks of dry grass and fling them from his finger tips into the air.

"You showed him, Duke. He can't tell us what to do all the time. Freak will get us out anyway. Don't worry.

"Don't be sad, Duke. Here look!"

Freddie found a crisp leaf and dangled it before the dog. Duke folded his legs and sank slowly to the ground. His head rested against one paw. Freddie crouched closer and scraped the leaf over the black, rough nose.

"Duke, it's an eagle. An eagle is attacking. Rush, run and bite it," Freddie cried, waving the leaf, swooping it through the air. "Hurry, Duke. Bite it!"

Duke did not move. He lay still, punctuating the the silence with faint whimpers. Freddie looked through the filter of black fur into the glass-brown eyes. Shadows of leaves waved back and forth across his body. Duke stared back at Freddie with a look that would wag his tail, but couldn't.

Freddie crushed the "eagle" in his hands and unclenched his fingers, showering the wind with broken, veined pieces. Scraping his hands on his earth-dampened jeans, he reached cautiously toward Duke's body. He patted the still head, sliding his hand slowly down towards his nose. His palms told him--it was warm.

"Duke, you're sick! What did he do to you? Freak, Freak, come and save Duke!"

"Duke, you'll see. Freak will come. Flash will bring him galloping up. He'll kill the guards and break through the bars and...We'll be saved. You'll see... Freddie patted Duke softly, slowly, then more swiftly as he said, "You'll see..."

Pulling at the air, the dog filled his lungs in one full breath. The ballooned body deflated as the air trailed out slowly into the fresh air once again. Then Duke puffed short breaths. They grew more infrequent like the ticks of a clock beginning to unwind.

"Was it the dragon or the king? Or does the prison make you sick, Duke? We've got to be brave. Don't cry, Duke!"

"Freak. Help, Freak." Freddie's cries wound through the bars, bounced off the leaves, and rolled back with no answer.

"He always comes. He always helps. He's got to help now!" Freddie's hand rode on the black fur, up and down, up and down, up, down,...Then it stopped.

"Duke, wake up! Duke! Freak is coming. He'll make you well. Duke don't die!"

Freddie rubbed the fur in even, gentle strokes. He lifted the limp tail and remembered some former meeting.

"Freak, hurry up, Freak, because Duke's not breathing. He's sick, Freak. Get us out of this prison, Freak!"

Freddie's shouts disturbed the gentle sway of the trees. Freddie looked up and saw green stripes against the blue ceiling like finger tips pointing and warning.

"The blue ceiling is cracking, Freak!"

And still the leaves swayed and Duke lay still. Freddie crouched closer. The black, shiny strands blended into a black shape unbroken. Freddie's tears rolled down his sunburnt cheeks and cut through the black fur to rest on the lifeless, loose skin. Freddie wrapped his arms around himself and grabbed, clutching his firm sides. He rocked back and forth on his knees moaning, "Friends are supposed to help. That's what friends are for. Where's Silver, Freak?"

"Duke, you won't ever wake up, will you? Will you, Duke?"

Freddie's arms dropped weakly, bending, his palms touching the damp earth. Leaning, slightly at first, he lunged forward and spread himself over the lifeless body. Tears stained his face, the fur, the ground.

Freddie cried, "Duke is dead. And Freak--he didn't come. Freak is dead! He's dead too!"

Freddie lay, protecting his dog from the cold, for a long time. Then he lifted his dirty, streaked face upward and let his eyes trace the outline of his cell.

It was crooked. The bars were jagged, swelled by leaves bowing to the wind. The ground waved and dove into furrows.

"That's not cement because it's bumpy. Cement is smooth and hard. Freak said it was cement."

He stood and kicked the dirt into the two abandoned foot-gullies. The wind blew harder and pushed a tall plant against his shoulder.

"You old, dry sunflower. I can break you. You're not iron."

Freddie bent the plant over his knee and pushed down. Snap. The heavy flower dropped, spreading its seeds among the furrows. The lower stem sprang back, quivered, and stood rigid as before.

"I don't need Freak. I don't need his silver."

He choked and bent toward the black, curly head. He patted and stroked it, crying, "Freak is dead, Duke. Freak is dead."

Compline Prayer: Wednesday

.....TO A FRIEND WHOSE FATHER LIES DEAD

in the name of
where my voice joins the angel choir of praise
I trace a path to him
who made heaven and earth

in seeking, find
finding falter for my lack in seeking, still-
ing fear in this emptied refuge
subterfuge of a relative trust

tasting, resting, receiving of
my father's inheritance
earth's-child I
see, know, glean of, lean on your closeness

but the *Te Lucis* hymns for us
and I commend myself and you and all of us
into the hands of Christ--
into his hands again

for my Simeon eyes light last upon these
moments in the name of
with assistance from and
through him amen.

SISTER LEONARD, CSJ

One Noon to J.F.K.

GINNY SPELTZ
AND JANE LUECKE

Weave through wind, proud cluster,
Bands and stars woven one
Since Concord, an offering to the
world sky.
And on a stem of silver,
Height in measured steps
Metaled and straight, it gives
what it has.
And tied, a bind unbound toward
extension.
In the wind, direction without limit.
Two sides strike and ride
A sun stream, sifting fog
To be seen around the world.
One noon, in the noontime,
Lifted from the heights,
Torn from every Concord,
Until the sky shifts and
The wind weaves, proud cluster.

Dorobo Day

Cabrini Literary Guild Writing Award
Honorable Mention in Article Contest

Atlantic Monthly National Creative Writing Contest
Fourth prize in Essay Contest

MARIANNE STANLEY

They met me at the airport that summer, everyone except Hotsi who never rode in cars. I stepped from the air-conditioned cabin into the muggy July day. The familiar drizzle seeped into my hair which had stayed beautifully bouffant across fourteen hours of Pacific Ocean. I saw them standing there waving but I couldn't wave back because I was carrying two raincoats, a typewriter, camera, hatbox, overnight case, portable radio and a paper bag full of books and records. I tried to smile but I had my ticket and passport gripped firmly in my teeth so I kind of nodded in their direction.

The airport looked different. Half the passage way leading to the customs and health inspection rooms was blocked off and little men were busy tearing up the corridors. The luggage ramp wasn't working, so we had to wait forty-five minutes for our luggage, and another forty-five for customs. I went through the usual about my pearls--Yes--I lived in Japan five years..but now only in summer--My parents Tokyo residents....Pearls I have received as gifts when I was twelve, thirteen, fifteen, eighteen, nineteen..." slowly, over and over again. The inspector gave me a piercing stare--they always did--shrugged his shoulders and closed my suitcase. I signalled for a porter--they wear red-caps in Japan too--and was on my way down another stretch of corridor-under-repair to the terminal, down the red carpet and under the sign saying 'Welcome to Japan' and through the archway to face the crowd--mostly short and dark-haired and staring.

The staring used to bother me. When I was thirteen I grew three inches in six months and surpassed the height of the average Japanese male, so that I felt they were laughing

at me. They were. But the past few years I had noticed a difference in their stares that was made delightfully explicit once on Ginza when a shy young man asked me if perhaps I was a movie star. So now I made a brief but effective pause under the arch giving my parents time to elbow to the front. They hadn't changed much in a year. My mother looked happy through her tears. She cries easily--whenever I come home for the summer. I think she cries when I leave too. I still missed my father's army uniform, but I'd had two summers to get used to the grey summer suit, and he still didn't look much like a civilian.

They guided me through the crowd to where the others were waiting: Mr. and Mrs. Yamaguchi from next door and their daughter Setsuko, our own Kimie-san who had been with us for eight years and her son Nobuyoshi, and finally Satcho-san the boy wonder who whistles "Maleguena" off-key while he vacuums the carpet. I didn't have a chance to ask them what was wrong with the airport. They were all over me with bows and hugs and "Isn't that a little too much eye-liner, dear?" and "Mary-san, you taller this year!"

We drove home slowly through the rain, but even more slowly than usual because there wasn't a single street left whole and untouched. I could have cried, All my favorite places were gone--Manos the Russian restaurant where we used to stop for piroshkies and beer on Friday nights, the Purple Place where I had my first gin fizz. Avenue F was unrecognizable through the wooden structures and holes in the cement.

In 1960 the news had hit that Tokyo was to host the 1964 Olympics--it had been bad then. But every summer since had been increasingly worse. My father kept reasurring me that by 1964 Tokyo would be back together again and streamlined at that, but still I was depressed. What bothered me more than the torn streets were the groups of thick grizzly men in filthy T-shirts and patched khakis who glared or yelled or spit at our car as we inched over the wooden planks covering the new subway under 40th.

"Day laborers," an import/export man's wife told me over martinis the next night at the American club. "The companies hire them from the farms and villages and sometimes from other islands. They're absolute animals. The crime rate has tripled. It isn't even safe for a *gaijin.*"

I didn't tell her, but it has never been safe for *gaijin.* Service *gaijin* maybe--we had lived on a fenced-of airbase where Japanese had to show passes to enter or leave.

But civilian *gaijin* are never safe. It is in fact traditional within American Club circles that every civilian American family can expect at least one *dorobo* per tour. The *dorobo* has in fact become a status symbol in the American community.

I don't like being a civilian. I suppose if we were part of a tremendous American company it would be different--they provide their Tokyo representatives with a full staff of servants and large houses. But when my father retired from the army three years ago, he took a position with a Japanese company. His salary is more than adequate for a small house, wife, maid, houseboy, dachshund, and daughter in a stateside college. But in comparison to our compatriots with their renovated Japanese feudal mansions, their downstairs and upstairs maids, their cooks, houseboys, laundresses, gardeners, and drivers, and their all-expense paid home-leaves every three years, we are only a step above destitution. Apparently the lower levels of Japanese society were aware of our insignificance. We had never had a *dorobo;* as far as I knew, we were the only American family who hadn't.

Last summer I guess the stars were right, or perhaps *dorobos* were getting desperate. Or it may have been because the police dropped their surveillance on our house after the Korean Coup. They had decided that either Dad was so deeply enmeshed in the cloak and dagger game that no amount of shadowing would uncover his sources and contacts or else that 'the fox'--his code name in police circles--was after all really retired from the army and doing an honest day's work.

July passed slowly and wetly. On a typical Sunday morning in August--damp, muggy, and so hot that my lipstick melted on my dresser, my mother came down at nine as she usually does to turn on the air conditioner. There under the *shoji* screen window in the livingroom were two short thick footprints, which she assumed had been left by my escort of the previous evening--a young Air Force officer who had joined us as we sat in the bar of a downtown officer's club. Even with Satcho-san and Kimie-san working six days a week, my mother is an exacting housekeeper. She wiped away all but the bare outlines of the footprints, mentally noting to remind me later that if my friends refused to take off their shoes at the door, they could at least wipe their feet on the mat.

When I came down later, I asked her what the window was doing open with the air-conditioner on. When she went to close the window, she asked Satcho-san what he'd done

with the screen. He looked blank for an instant then beamed, bowed and pidgin-Englished, "Ah yes, screen outside on ground, Misses." And it was.

Then my mother noticed the wide expanse of white carpet between the door and the unscreened window under which she had found the footprints--my friend would have to have taken a flying leal across the room in order to leave his footprints under the window and nowhere else. Adding to this the open window and removed screen--both abnormalities in the air conditioned room--she reached a tentative conclusion. "You know," she mused, "we may have had a *dorobo*."

Satcho-san and my father prowled around outside for a half-hour and uncovered a foot long burn in another screen which had served no purpose because the window was behind the piano and there was no way to crawl through. Then I found a thick, muddy handprint on a nearby wall. The handprint did it. My father called Yamaguchi-san who came bounding over from his house next door in his red, orange, black, and yellow bermudas, his matching red, orange, black and yellow sport shirt, and his *Japanese/English--English/Japanese Dictionary*.

The Yamaguchis are ideal neighbors. Their daughter, Setsuko-san age seven, considers me her equal and sends her maid over with requests that I come play with her; Mr. Yamaguchi's sister, nicknamed Susie Wong, is a great believer in America and American servicemen. The Yamaguchis have rescued us from overflowing septic tanks, unfriendly rag-pickers, and a hoard of flying cockroaches, and it was Mrs. Yamaguchi who called in a veterinarian in the nick of time the day Hotsi drank the can of Renuzit cleaning fluid. All they ask in return for their neighborliness is an evening or four a week with us, drinking bourbon and Seven-Ups, playing Latin music on the stereo and discussing the weather in broken English/Japanese--Japanese/English.

Yamaguchi-san assessed the situation while my father and Satcho-san attempted to dissuade my mother from wiping the handprint off the wall. Yamaguchi-san was hot, tired, and upset by the gravity of the evidence. Sweat ran down his face and his red, orange, yellow, and black sport shirt stuck to his back. My mother served him some vanilla ice-cream and some black cherry soda because the Commissary was having a run on black cherry soda and my father, in a rash moment, had bought us a case. Even though nothing was missing from the household, Yamaguchi-san recommended we call in the police.

Every season each respectable household sends a house-boy to the neighborhood police box with a bottle of *sake* in thanks for their protection. We had just sent our summer offering to the Hachiyama patrolman, Fujisake-san, a bright-eyed fellow who called on us periodically to assure us he was protecting us from construction workers and warn us to lock our doors. He always had an especially large smile for my father and a twinkle in his eye that said, "I know your game--you're not really retired from the army!" But he was friendly and we felt better to know he was around. On hot nights when I couldn't sleep I would watch him walking up and down Hachiyama-cho swinging his club and whistling and old folk-song.

Having eaten all his vanilla ice-cream and politely taken a few sips of the black cherry soda, Yamaguchi-san decided we must definitely call Fujisake-san. (This is done by standing in the alleyway and yelling "Fujisake-san!") He came in a matter of minutes--a short squat man, made shorter by his bowed legs. He too wore bermudas--grey police bermudas--and carried his fingerprint detector set in a suitcase. He bowed to us all and detected fingerprints on the glass--my mother's. The muddy hand on the wall yielded no prints, because, as Fujisake-san explained to Yamaguchi-san in a series of short, clipped sentences, the *dorobo* had either just emerged from the bath-house next door or was extremely nervous at the job--the prints were blurred. Fujisake-san shook his head and paced back and forth with an occasional "saaaaaaaa." My mother fixed him some vanilla ice cream and black cherry soda.

Fujisake-san, after careful thought concluded that this was a job for no one but the Tokyo Metropolitan Police. Within the hour six plain-clothesmen from Central Police Headquarters descended upon us with cameras, bigger and better fingerprint detector sets and numerous forms for us to fill out in triplicate. After fingerprinting and photographing the handprint, screen, livingroom and entire household, the detectives withdrew to the porch for a detailed analysis of the case. My mother served them large glasses of black cherry soda--the ice-cream was all gone. In a matter of hours they reached the conclusion that the *dorobo* had kept a steady watch on the house, seen my parents come in and the lights go out, and made his entrance. He had just settled his muddy feet on the carpet when my taxi pulled up outside and the Lieutenant and I came up the stairs. *Dorobo*-san had departed in a hurry, probably bracing his

clammy palm against the wall for support, and naturally enough, not bothering to close the window and replace the screen.

* * * * *

That night, after he and Yamaguchi-san had installed double locks on every door and window in sight, my father phoned one of his American Club pals. "It's your first *dorobo*, isn't it?" said the friend, his voice welcoming my father to the American Civilian Community.

"Yes," my father said proudly.

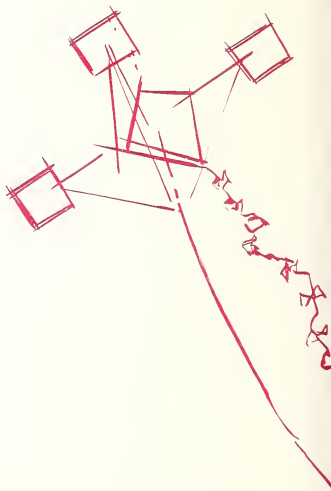
To a Lizard

Small alligator, I can feel you in my hand
    your sylph of a slithery tail
lashing as eye lashes palm of my
    holding your body, bird-light in bones,
    and skin that slides
        on warm dust as slime

CAMILLE ESSELLE

To a Kite

To a Kite:
Skeleton of play
gnarled on death wires,
you ride the phantom wind,
sodden paper flesh
ripped from stick bones.



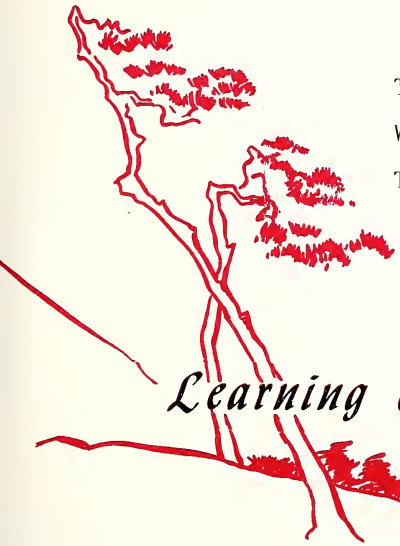
Kite
Geometrical
figure tissue-papered
against a colbalt
plane.

MARIE DE ARCANGELIS

A Just-for-fun Haiku

JOANNE THORNDYKE

It takes courage to
Spank what I so carefully
Soothed through diaper rash.



The funny puppy
Wrinkled up his nose and sneezed,
Then fell backward--shocked.

MARILYN EHRLER

Learning of Life

A Space Age Limerick

JEANNE SCHANHAAR

You call me a silly buffoon,
When I say there's a man in the moon,
He is stout and yellow,
A downright good fellow,
And someone you all may meet soon.

Elwood, a hillbilly buffoon,
Never learned to whistle a tune
Till he strayed up to a still,
Built high on a hill;
Now corn likker has taught him to croon.

EILEEN MILLER

Mountain Music

Serenity

CAMILLE ABDELNOUR

Green rests
in tall summer grass;
it wraps
free fields in comfort
and brushes
the cheeks of a child.

Clouds

SISTER GRACE MARIE, CSJ

Slowly,
flowing mountains
glide across the blue sky
rolling aimlessly with the wind,
seaward.

Interlude

T. JEANETTE KROGER

Night is a time both of darkness and of the gleam of stars
and moon, and strangely fuses two delights--
light, and the black covering of colors from the heights
of mountains and from the deepest places of canyons where bars
of rock welded by time interplay with spars
of pine. Two darknesses meet and melt where sight
is still possible somewhere in the middle. Bright
wavers here, keeping two circles of shade apart.

In the moment of grey, of half-color, the last
guests of day accustom eyes to absence
of brown and green--blue remains, and white,
but more than these, a wonder at the fast
and silent hold night takes, and the soft cadence
of the dark-people, the whisper of sand in the night.

Detained for His Majesty's Pleasure

MICHAEL MCINTYRE

Stark he stands pacing with tall skill
between four walls, and doors clank.
Each day marked with 1 and real
crosses appear as if all time were blank.
He strikes again and again with battered hands.
The lines in his face ripple, plead for
someone but the silence kneads him to
acceptance. Stooped, he crosses to the other
side and yields to the lumpy cot. He knows--
an admission...the guillotine will fall--teared
he shouts, "I hate them all!"

Always

SISTER MONA ANN, CSJ

time
ticks
away
in
small
puddles
opening
eyes
to
drops
of
grey
and
turning
blue
sky.

Now It's a Pitcher

OLIVIA GRIECO

--It's always cold in the attic, maybe because the attic is green, maybe that has some kind of spooky effect on it.

Pete reached down to plug in the small electric heater.

--One curling orange light, and then another, and a final one, and now the crackling noise and the quiet buzz will start, and then it will be warm in that one corner and cold back here where my arm drops off the arm of the couch. Cold and heat at once--feet warm on one end, arm cold--not two people, just one, me, Pete Dezilio, hot and cold Pete.

He sank more comfortably down in the couch and into the darkness of the room and listened to the water from the kitchen sink travel and travel through pipes. The sound encircled the house, encircled him.

--Mama always runs the water the whole time she's doing the dishes. I never did like doing the dishes. Mama's so fussy.

Pete smiled.

--The ceiling is always cracked, it's always cracked in this room. It keeps changing all the time. Now it's a pitcher, a chipped pitcher ready to pour--ready to pour on the light bulb and the string (tattered in places) that hangs from it. I used to think it was a kind of bird with only one wing, but now it's a pitcher ready to pour the bulb and the old string and me and the couch and the floor and maybe through the floor into Mama's kitchen--and then Mama will be upset and trace the drippings back here to my green attic and have papa mend the pitcher.

Downstairs the noise of the water traveling stopped with a whistle and the rattle of pipes. Pete's glance fell gently from the pitcher down the string and found his uncurtained window.

--Stars are such quiet things, all tied up in little bunches or set forever apart. They come and go, but when

they come it's always to the same old place. They should be able to race and collide and surprise me every night. Who knows, they may like having a little niche up there and having a name--but to race in a black sky, to wind your way through tunnels and tunnels of air....my green attic, my old heater, my broken pitcher...

Pete hardly noticed the slow, steady creaking on the stairway outside his door.

"Pete, you in there?"

"Yeah, Ma, I'm here."

She turned the knob quietly and opened the door slightly, permitting an almost foreign air to enter the room. Pete watched it transform the pitcher on the ceiling. Now it was...he'd have to think.

"Pete, you studying up here? With the light off like this? Before you know it, you'll be half-blind."

Pete threw both his arms high over his head, "See, no book, no problem."

He smelled the detergent on her hands and the dinner odors on her apron. The green air seemed to take up the aromas in a playful way, rearranging, concocting. He smiled vaguely and turned his face up toward the woman.

--She's getting to look like all the old Italian mothers I remember--pictures (brown and torn in corners) in the old scrapbook in the red basket...and old Mrs. Angelo and Nonna...short, shorter seeming, heavy, aprons and cotton, flowered dresses and a cross on a bare neck.

She shook his long, dry, brown hair with her moist, red hand. Smiling...

"You should be studying. You have homework, but I never see you do it. Why do you want to be that way, Pete?"

Pete flinched in irritation and sat up. She sat down quietly beside him taking his stiff hand in hers. She began to stroke.

"You don't remember your Grampa, but he was a very educated man--raised in the ole country, but he came from money, ya know. His brother Antonio was a doctor. Yeah, your Grampa was a good man, a smart man. He was taught English in the ole country, a smart man."

Pete tried ignoring the aromas and the stroking and the story. With a kind of anxiety, he looked around the room in search of...he didn't know what--something to distract him. He looked for his pitcher, but the hall light that broke in through the open door seemed to hide it or the key to it. Where had it begun? He strained

to find at least the chip. She continued steadily.

"One thing I used to tell Pa, I used to say, when my Pete get's big, he's going to school, Pa. He's going to be a lawyer or a doctor or a teacher, but he's going to school. He's going to be a success, I used to tell him that."

She bowed her head, then turned it gently up with a warm smile. Her shiny face caught highlights from the glow of the heater. She straightened the collar of his red shirt.

"That color is good on you. It's a strong color, exciting, I guess. Your Grampa used to wear red ties." She smiled broadly.

He found her warmth inescapable for a moment. "The smile is good," he thought, "It's good." His hand grew warm in hers, and he gave it a gentle squeeze.

"You gotta think of your future, Pete. I want you to be happy in this world. I don't want you to have it hard like me and Papa did. I want you to have all the good things. Papa and I worked so hard to give you those things."

Pete was anxious now to reply, to say, "Mama, you know I'd never hurt you and Papa. Mama, I want to do what's right." His voice found no force and his throat felt bound up, locked. He couldn't talk about it. He searched himself for a strength. He looked at the ceiling with a sigh.

"Did ya ever notice, Ma, how the crack in the ceiling looks like a pitcher with a chip in it. Right now ya can't see it too well for the light, but really..."

"Pete, we have picture ceilings in all the rooms in this house. In the kitchen it's an elephant." She patted his hand. Pete smiled, "Don't worry about me, Mama, Grampa wouldn't be ashamed of me."

"Oh, we'd never be ashamed of you. We just want to be sure you have a good life, that you're a successful man some day." She patted his hand again, then stroked it gently. She rose heavily from the couch, her strong hands pressing against her knees for leverage.

"How about if we turn the light on so you can study?"

"Yeah, Ma, I think I will read for awhile."

She flicked the switch and went out quietly, closing the door behind her. Pete reached down on the floor around one corner of the couch. His hand blindly took up the heavy book on top, a grey book. *United States History* in strong, black letters decorated the cover. He ran his hand over it and thumbed through the first hundred pages

letting them flutter through his hand, feeling the breeze'til they settled quietly. He shut the book and placed it back on the floor.

--The light is too bright. It makes all things kind of one color. He stretched his body over the couch and reached for the light switch. It snapped down. He enjoyed orange against black in the little heater and white against blue out the uncurtained window. The strength he had sought moments before lay somewhere out there, he thought--in those stars all tied up with a niche and a name. He sank down into the couch and gazed comfortable--up.

--I don't want to hurt Mama and Papa. I don't want them to be ashamed....(then he smiled.) Now it's a pitcher again.

Fata Morgana

Atlantic Monthly National Creative Writing Contest
Merit Paper in Poem Contest

Retrospection quietly

climbs crack-dry bones,

curves nerves to eyes

that watch not tears but images
resettle.

Subtle the ways tears don't come.

CAMILLE ESSELLE

Bond

T. JEANETTE KROGER

Because I know the gentle hills, the land
holds me, and as my thoughts reach up my toes
wriggle in dark black earth. It felt the hoes
of my fathers--men who scored the earth with hand
and scattered seeds so corn in fields would stand
head-high. I turn to the wind that blows
from the north--the grain, like a river, flows
southward. My fathers left me golden land.

But if I'm asked of blue, I answer, sky
was here before the land. When the earth was born
this blue begot the blue of sea, but sun
drew back its hue to give to wings that fly,
that speak with the clouds. But as a man I'm sworn
to earth, to the life-thread that makes us one.